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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 4 MADRID 1559

E.O. 11652: NGDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: THE SPANISH POLITICAL PROCESS--SHORT TERM PROSPECTS AND MID-RANGE CHALLENGES

REF: MADRID 600

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS: THE SPANISH POLITICAL PROCESS HAS NOW MOVED TO THE POINT WHERE GENUINELY FREE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS BEFORE THE END OF JUNE HAVE BECOME A VIRTUAL CERTAINTY. THE PASSAGE HAS BEEN DIFFICULT, AND MARRED BY SPORADIC VIOLENCE BUT SPAIN HAS WON THE FIRST BET WITH POST-FRANCO HISTORY. THE OVERWHELMING VICTORY FOR THE POLITICAL
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REFORM LAW IN THE REFERENDUM, AFTER THE FRANCO-ERA CORTES APPROVED THE PROPOSAL AND IN EFFECT SIGNED THE DEATH WARRANT FOR THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE OLD REGIME, SIGNED THE TRIUMPH OF THE EVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY OF POLITICAL CHANGE. THIS REFERENDUM CONFERRED LEGITIMACY UPON THE EMERGING DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM TO REPLACE THE PECULIAR AUTHORITARIAN LEGITIMACY THAT DIED

WITH FRANCO, AND THIS WITHOUT THE SHARP, OFTEN VIOLENT AND TRAUMATIC BREAK WITH THE PAST CUSTOMARY IN TRANSFORMATIONS FROM AUTHORITARIAN RULE TO DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES.

--THE NAME OF THE GAME IS NOW ELECTIONS, ELECTIONS FOR A BICAMERAL PARLIAMENT (CORTES) IN WHICH THE POPULATION-BASED, PROPORTIONALLY ELECTED LOWER HOUSE (CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES) WILL HAVE AN APPRECIABLE, BUT NOT ABSOLUTE PRIMACY OVER THE GEOGRAPHICALLY-BASED, MAJORITY ELECTED UPPER HOUSE (SENATE). THE SECOND BET WITH HISTORY, THAT DEMOCRACY CAN BE MADE TO WORK IN SPAIN, REMAINS ON THE TABLE. THAT OUTCOME WILL BE TRULY TESTED ONLY AFTER ELECTIONS, NOT ONLY IN THE QUARRELSOME TASK OF CONSTITUTION WRITING, BUT ALSO IN RESPECT OF THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES OF GOVERNANCE, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC, IN A DEMOCRATIC FRAMEWORK. NONE OF THIS WILL BE EASY, BUT THE CURRENT TEMPER OF THE PEOPLE, THE SKILLS AND PRESENT POPULARITY OF THE KING AND PRIME MINISTER AND THE DEFUSING FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST OF THE MILITARY COMBINE TO OFFER THE PROSPECT THAT GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE CAN BE MADE TO WORK HERE. IN ALL THIS, WE ARE SOMETHING MORE THAN SYMPATHETIC SPECTATORS, OUR INTERESTS IN A HEALTHIER STRONGER, MORE COHERENT, DEMOCRATIC EUROPE ARE INVOLVED IN THE SPANISH EXPERIMENT. END SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

1. THIS MESSAGE OFFERS A SHORT TO MID-TERM ANALYSIS OF THE PROSPECTS FOR SPANISH POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, CONTINGENT UPON THE RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES WITHIN EVEN A RELATIVELY SURPRISE-FREE SCENARIO AND UPON THE UNCER-

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TAINTY ATTENDING ELECTORATE BEHAVIOR IN A COUNTRY WITHOUT A FREE ELECTION IN 40 YEARS. FOR SIMPLICITY'S SAKE WE ONLY TOUCH UPON A FEW BACKGROUND ISSUES FIRST:

--THE INITIAL STAGE OF LABOR REFORM, IMPORTANT FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS, SHOULD TAKE PLACE SHORTLY, LEGALIZING FREE TRADE UNIONS.

-- A DE FACTO AMNESTY, BASICALLY FOR BASQUE PRISONERS, HAS BEEN PROMISED BY SUAREZ AND SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY EASTER, TAKING MUCH OF THE PHYSICAL TENSION OUT OF THE BASQUE SITUATION.

--THE LATENT, OFTEN EXAGGERATED, THREAT FROM THE MILITARY HAS GREATLY DIMINISHED IN THE WAKE OF MILITARY COMMAND CHANGES AND THE REFERENDUM. FIRST VICE PRESIDENT FOR DEFENSE AFFAIRS, LT. GEN. GUTIERREZ MELLADO, HAS PROVEN A TOWER OF STRENGTH AND THE MOMENTUM ENGENDERED BY THE PROCESS HAS CLEARLY RELEGATED THE NOTION OF A MILITARY CABAL TO A WORST CASE SCENARIO IN WHICH A MARKED DOWNWARD ECONOMIC SPIRAL AND PERSISTENT, SEVERE PUBLIC ORDER PROBLEMS WOULD COME TO BE SEEN AS INSUSCEPTIBLE OF SOLUTION BY THE FLEDGLING DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM.

--THE REFORM PROCESS MOVES SPAIN TOWARDS EUROPE,
BUT THE LIFTING OF EUROPE'S POLITICAL VETO WILL REVEAL
ECONOMIC OBSTACLES TO SPAIN'S EEC MEMBERSHIP THAT WILL
PROVE LENGTHY AND DIFFICULT, THOUGH NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO
RESOLVE. NATO IS ANOTHER MATTER. HERE, THE QUESTION
OF SPAIN'S MEMBERSHIP IS ANYTHING BUT RESOLVED BY THE
SPANISH THEMSELVES. WHILE CIVILIAN LEADERS AND, TO A
DEGREE, THE CURRENT TOP MILITARY LEADERSHIP INCLINE
TENTATIVELY TOWARDS SPAIN'S ENTRY, THERE IS NO PUBLIC
SURGE OF INTEREST, PARTICULARLY SO ON THE LEFT WHICH
IS SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE NOR IS THERE ANYTHING LIKE A CONSENSUS
AMONG THE MILITARY ITSELF, WHERE THERE REMAINS CONSIDERABLE
RELUCTANCE. ALL THIS MAY DELAY OR PREVENT SPANISH ENTRY INTO NATO,
A FACT THAT WE MUST KEEP IN MIND.

--THE CURRENT SPANISH GOVERNMENT CONTINUES CLOSE
BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. BUT SEEKS ALSO INCREAS-
INGLY TO STRESS ITS VOCATION FOR CLOSE RELATIONS WITH
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LATIN AMERICA AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES AND, AS NOTED,
WITH EUROPE.

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2. TO BE SURE, TWO QUITE SEPARATE PROBLEMS STILL CAST SHADOWS ON THE POLITICAL PROCESS. HOWEVER, THE FIRST, TERRORISM, HAS RECEDED WITH THE LIBERATION OF ORIOL AND VILLAESCUSA AND THE ARREST OF MOST OF THEIR KIDNAPPERS, THOUGH THE POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE REMAINS. THE SECOND, SPAIN'S TROUBLED ECONOMY, HAS BEEN LESS OF A PROBLEM BUT MAY COME TO BE THE GREATEST THREAT OVER THE MID-RANGE UNLESS INFLATION, THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS, AND UNEMPLOYMENT ARE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL.

-- THE TERRORIST EFFORT CAME TOO LATE TO UNHINGE THE PROCESS. IN THE EVENT, THE GRAPO KIDNAPPERS, ON THE EVIDENCE A SMALL GROUP OF NATIVE LEFT-WING FANATICS THOUGH QUESTIONS REMAIN ABOUT THE SOURCE OF THEIR SUPPORT, CONFIDENTIAL

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WAITED, TILL JUST BEFORE THE REFERENDUM. FORTIFIED BY THE REFERENDUM, THE GOS (MILITARY INCLUDED) KEPT ITS NERVE. THE SPECTACULAR FREEING OF ORIOL AND VILLAESCUSA BROKE THE TENSION. THE MURDER OF THE FIVE COMMUNIST LAWYERS, LIKELY THE WORK OF THE EXTREME RIGHT (PERHAPS IN CONJUNCTION WITH FOREIGN ULTRA-RIGHTISTS) REMAINS UNSOLVED AND A NAGGING ISSUE FOR A GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS HAD DIFFICULTY WITH RIGHTIST SYMPATHIZERS IN THE POLICE ESTABLISHMENT. RECENT POLICE ACTIONS AGAINST RIGHT WING EXTREMISTS SUGGEST THAT POLICE ARE MOVING TOWARD A MORE EVEN-HANDED POSTURE.

-- THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IS TREATED EXTENSIVELY IN OTHER REPORTING (E.G. THE NEW YEAR ASSESSMENT, MADRID 1145). THE GOS HAS TAKEN PALLIATIVE MEASURES BUT HAD JUDGED THAT A MAJOR EFFORT, SAY, A STABILIZATION PROGRAM, MUST WAIT UPON THE CORTES ELECTIONS. WHILE THERE ARE OBVIOUSLY POLITICAL LIMITS ON ECONOMIC ACTION, A GROWING BODY OF OPINION ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM DISAGREES WITH THE GOS STRATEGY, SUGGESTING THAT IN THE WAKE OF THE REFERENDUM THE SUAREZ GOVERNMENT HAS MORE OF A MANDATE THAN WILL OBTAIN IN A SOMEWHAT FRAGMENTED PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION AFTER ELECTIONS. BE THAT AS IT MAY, WE JUDGE THAT THE GOS WILL NOT DO MUCH MORE THAN WHAT IT HAS JUST ANNOUNCED (MADRID 1415). THE ECONOMIC SITUATION WILL BE A BURDEN.

3. IN CONTRAST, THE MONARCHY, BOUYED BY THE PERSONAL POPULARITY OF THE KING AND QUEEN, IS HEALTHY, A MAJOR

FACTOR IN THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT. NEITHER FRANCO'S DESIGNATION NOR THE "ABDICATION OF RIGHTS" OF THE KING'S FATHER, DON JUAN, PRESUMABLY AFTER THE CORTES ELECTIONS, CAN CONFER LASTING LEGITIMACY UPON THE MONARCHY IN MODERN SPAIN. THAT REQUIRES A CONSENSUS ON A CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM OVER WHICH THE KING PRESIDES, A CONSENSUS TO BE FORMALLY SEALED WHEN THE NEW CONSTITUTION, WHICH WILL MAKE EXPLICIT REFERENCE TO THE MONARCHY, IS PUT TO THE REFERENDUM PERHAPS
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A YEAR FROM THE ELECTIONS. IN THE MEANTIME, JUAN CARLOS HAS WISELY AND NECESSARILY EXERCISED POWERS (E.G. THE SACKING OF ARIAS AND HIS REPLACEMENT BY SUAREZ) THAT HE CANNOT PERMANENTLY EXERCISE EXCEPT AT PERIL TO HIS THRONE. FOR JUAN CARLOS THE TEST WILL COME IN RESISTING THE LURE OF THE CONTINUED EXERCISE OF POWER WHEN IT IS NO LONGER POLITIC. THE PROSPECT--UNPLEASANT TO THE KING--OF HAVING A FRAGA-LED ALIANZA POPULAR DEMAND THE PRIME MINISTRY SEEMS UNLIKELY, THE MONARCHY'S PROSPECTS OVER THE NEXT YEAR, FORTIFIED BY THE KING'S POLITICAL SKILLS AND THE COMMON TOUCH THAT HE AND HIS ATTRACTIVE QUEEN SHOW, LOOK GOOD.

4. THE KING'S CHOICE OF PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ WAS A BOLD AND BRILLIANT STROKE, ALL THE MORE BECAUSE IT PROVOKED GREAT DOUBTS AND ANGERED TWO MAJOR WOULD-BE PRIME MINISTERS, FRAGA AND AREILZA. THE KING HAS GIVEN SUAREZ HIS HEAD, THOUGH THEY FREQUENTLY CONSULT AND MAJOR DECISIONS CLEARLY REQUIRE THE KING'S ACQUIESCENCE. IN TURN SUAREZ HAS LED INTELLIGENTLY AND DECISIVELY WITH A GENERALLY SURE POLITICAL TOUCH EXTENDING UNTIL THE RECENT CONTRETEMP TO EVEN THE SOCIALISTS, PERMITTING THE KING TO DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM THE OVERT POLITICAL FRAY. FRAGA'S LEADERSHIP OF THE ALIANZA POPULAR, THE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION TO THE SUAREZ GOVERNMENT, HAS PLACED SUAREZ COMFORTABLY IN THE CENTER OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, WHERE HE IS BY FAR THE MOST POPULAR POLITICAL FIGURE IN SPAIN. IT SEEMS PROBABLE SUAREZ WILL REMAIN AS PRIME MINISTER AFTER ELECTIONS WITH THE SUPPORT OF SOME SORT OF CENTER COALITION AND THE LIKELY ACQUIESCENCE, HOWEVER GRUDGING, OF OTHER PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS.

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5. THE RECENT LEGALIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES, SYMBOL-
LIZED BY THE REGISTRATION OF THE TRADITIONAL DEMOCRATIC
OPPOSITION PARTIES, MARKED THE POLITICAL LEGITIMIZATION
OF THE "OTHER SPAIN," THOSE WHO LOST THE CIVIL WAR.
THE GOS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE TRADITIONAL OPPOSITION
ON THE SOON TO BE PROMULGATED ELECTORAL LAW AND RULES
OF THE ROAD HAVE GONE FAIRLY WELL, LESS SO WITH THE
CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION OF THE ALIANZA POPULAR. AT ALL
EVENTS, A ROUGH CONSENSUS ON THE ELECTORAL GAME WILL
LIKELY ENGAGE THE PRINCIPAL PLAYERS IN THE AGREED SET
OF RULES.

6. THE SPANISH PEOPLE, WHO SEEM RATHER ATTRACTED TO THE
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NOTION OF DECIDING WHO SHALL GOVERN, COMPRISE A VASTLY
DIFFERENT ELECTORATE FROM THE ONE THAT VOTED IN 1936
BECAUSE OF THE SWEEPING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGES THAT
TOOK PLACE DURING THE LONG YEARS OF FRANCO'S RULE. THE
VERY NEWNESS OF THE ELECTORAL GAME AND THE LACK TO DATE OF A
COHERENT SPECTRUM OF OPTIONS FROM WHICH TO CHOOSE MAKE FOOLISH
AN EFFORT TO SPEAK WITH ANY CERTAINTY ABOUT ELECTORAL RESULTS.
THE POLLS, STILL UNCERTAIN, BUT BECOMING MORE REFINED, COINCIDE

THAT A GOODLY PORTION OF THE ELECTORATE, AS MUCH AS 40 PERCENT HAVE
SIMPLY NOT MADE UP THEIR MIND. NONETHELESS, CERTAIN
FAIRLY BROAD GENERALIZATIONS ARE PERMISSIBLE.
--THE CENTER OF GRAVITY RESTS CLEARLY IN THE CENTER,
DEFINED LOOSELY FROM PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES TO
MODERATES OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PERSUASION. THERE IS A
SLIGHTLY CONSERVATIVE BENT, THOUGH, TO BE SURE, THE
DISTURBING SENSE OF CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS, AS ELSEWHERE
IN EUROPE, MARS AN OTHERWISE FAIRLY CONSENSUAL IMPRESSION.
FAR OUT EXTREMES, E.G. ULTRAS, FALANGISTS, ETC.
ON THE EXTREME RIGHT AND OBSCURE MARXIST-LENINIST GROUPS TO THE
LEFT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY PROBABLY HOLD THE ALLEGIANCE OF NO MORE
THAN 3 PERCENT OF THE SPANISH ELECTORATE APIECE.
--GRAPHICALLY DEMONSTRATING THIS POINT, REPUTABLE
SOCIAL SCIENTISTS HAVE JUST PUBLISHED POLL DATA USING A SCALE
OF ISSUE AND ATTITUDE INDICATORS THAT SHOW THAT SPAIN IS NOT
DIFFERENT FROM, BUT RATHER SIMILAR TO MOST WESTERN EUROPEAN
ELECTORATES
FALLING IN THE MEDIAN OF THE WESTERN EUROPEAN POLITICAL MIND SET.
--THE COMMUNIST PARTY, WHETHER FORMALLY LEGALIZED BY THE SUPREME
COURT OR RUNNING UNDER AN "INDEPENDENT ALLIANCE" WILL NOT DO WELL.
THE USUAL SPREAD GIVEN THE PCE TODAY IS 6-10 PERCENT, NOTHING TO
WORRY ABOUT ELECTORALLY. IT IS THE PCE'S ORGANIZATIONAL
STRENGTH IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND ITS INFILTRATION OF THE MEDIA
AND ACADEMIC WORLD THAT IS DISTURBING.
--THE LEFT, VARIOUS SOCIALISTS PLUS THE COMMUNISTS AND MARXIST-
LENINIST SPLINTERS, IS WORTH PROBABLY NO MORE THAN 30 PERCENT
OF THE ELECTORATE. THE EUROPEAN RECOGNIZED SPANISH SOCIALIST
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WORKERS PARTY (PSOE) OF FELIPE GONZALEZ IS CLEARLY STRONGEST
(AROUND 15PERCENT) BUT BESET BY THE PROBLEMS OF SOCIALIST UNITY,
AN IDEOLOGICAL IDENTITY PROBLEM AND THE DIFFICULTY A RELATIVELY
MODERATE LEADERSHIP HAS IN PRESENTING A MODERATE IMAGE
BECAUSE OF ITS RADICAL ACTIVIST BASE. POLLS SHOW THE SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC LABEL MAY HAVE SOME APPEAL TO THE ELECTORATE BUT THE
SPLINTER SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GROUPS ARE NOT PARTICULARLY CREDIBLE.
THE LEFT POSES NO ELECTORAL PROBLEM IN THE SHORT RUN. IN THE LONG
RUN, ABSENT THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESPONSIBLE DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE
ON THE LEFT, THE PCE MIGHT COME TO OCCUPY THE LEADERSHIP THERE,
HENCE OUR CONCERN ABOUT WHITER SPANISH SOCIALISM.
--IN SUM, BEYOND THE "TWO SPAIN'S" THERE IS A THIRD SPAIN,
NEITHER REVANCHIST NOR NOSTALGIC, THAT PRESENTLY DOMINATES THE EL-
ECTORATE. WITHIN THAT THIRD SPAIN CO-EXIST MUCH OF SOCIOLOGICAL
FRANCOISM" (THOSE WHO RECOGNIZE THE MATERIAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF
FRANCOISM BUT WERE NEVER FANATIC SUPPORTERS) AND MUCH OF THE
TRADITIONAL DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION.

7. WHAT IS WANTED NOW IS A COHERENT SET OF POLITICAL OPTIONS.
WHICH WILL APPEAL TO MODERATELY CONSERVATIVE SPANISH ELECTORATE.

HERE MATTERS LAG, EVEN THOUGH THERE HAS BEEN SOME COALESCENCE, SO THAT THE 200 ODD POLITICAL PARTIES CAN BE REDUCED ROUGHLY TO 11 OR 12 "FAMILIES," TWO EXTREMIST, ONE CONSERVATIVE, THREE OR FOUR CENTRIST, ONE MODERATE LEFT "OUTSIDERS" FAMILY, TWO SOCIALIST, ONE COMMUNIST AND ONE GRAB BAG OF UNAFFILIATED REGIONAL GROUPS. BUT THE SITUATION IS QUITE UNSTABLE, EXCEPT PERHAPS FOR THE ALIANZA POPULAR "FAMILY," WHICH PRESENTS A RELATIVELY COHERENT CONSERVATIVE OPTION. THE MILLING AROUND IN THE CENTER CAN BE COMPREHENDED, BUT NOT EASILY ANALYZED, IN TERMS OF PERSONAL RIVALRIES, THE TENSION AND THE POSTURING BETWEEN THOSE LONG IN OPPOSITION AND THOSE WHO RECENTLY SERVED FRANCO, AND THE UNCERTAINTY OVER WHICH WAY SUAREZ WILL JUMP. (SUAREZ HAS TWO OPTIONS: TO STAY OVERTLY ABOVE THE BATTLE, TAKE A SENATE SEAT AND RETAIN THE PRIME MINISTRY THROUGH THE POST-ELECTORAL ENDORSEMENT OF CENTER AND CENTER-LEFT GROUPS, OR STAND FOR THE LOWER HOUSE AS THE LEADER OF A CENTRIST COALITION.

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8. GROSSLY OVERSIMPLIFIED, THE CENTER PROBLEM BOILS DOWN TO WHETHER TO PUT TOGETHER A UNIFIED CENTRIST ALLIANCE FOR THE LOWER HOUSE ELECTION OR TO HAVE A TWO-SIDED (OR POSSIBLY THREE-SIDED) CENTER IN WHICH AN "ESTABLISHMENT" COALITION (THE CENTRO DEMOCRATICO) AND AN "OPPOSITION" COALITION (THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC "TEAM") WORK THE TWO SIDES OF CENTER STREET, WITH THE "OUTSIDER" SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (LASUEN, THE PSOE "HISTORICOS," ETC.) TRYING AGAINST WHAT ARE STILL CONSIDERABLE ODDS TO PICK UP ENOUGH CENTER LEFT VOTERS TO MAKE A SHOWING.

--THE CENTRO DEMOCRATICO (MANIPULATED AND BACKED BY SUAREZ AND OTHER GOS MINISTERS, E.G. SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT OSORIO AND FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA) HOLDS WITHIN IT THE CABANILLAS/ AREILZA LED PARTIDO POPULAR AND THE ESTABLISHMENT SOCIAL DEMOCRATS OF FERNANDEZ ORDONEZ PLUS ASSORTED OTHERS. THE CENTRO, SHOWING ITS GOAL OF REACHING 40 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE BECOMES POSSIBLE IF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC "TEAM" OF RUIZ GIMENEZ, GIL ROBLES AND THE IMPORTANT BASQUE AND CATALAN CD'S AGREE TO ELECTORAL ALLIANCE WITH THE CENTRO. THE CD TEAM HAS REFUSED ALL BLANDISHMENTS TO DATE, PREFERRING A TWO-SIDED CENTER, THOUGH A NEW, BYZANTINE EFFORT TO ENTICE THEM IS UNDERWAY.

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--IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, SOME OF THE CENTRO
DEMOCRATICO WANT SUAREZ TO RUN IN ORDER TO SAVE THE CENTER FROM
ITSELF. YET ANOTHER CENTRIST FAMILY, THE OLD REGIME PRO-
GRESSIVES AND WOULD BE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS OF THE INDEPENDENT
PARLIAMENTARY GROUP (BACKED BY INTERIOR MINISTER MARTIN VILLA)
ALSO WANT, MORE THAN ANYTHING, AN INDICATION FROM SUAREZ.

--IN THIS WORLD OF UNSTABLE ISOTOPES, NO ONE DOUBTS THAT
ELECTORAL LOGIC WILL IMPOSE AT LEAST A DEGREE OF
FURTHER COALESCENCE PERHAPS ON THE LEFT AS WELL AS THE
CENTER, BUT FEW WOULD VENTURE TO PREDICT EXACTLY WHAT
WILL EMERGE. THE CATALYST MAY TURN OUT TO BE SUAREZ'S
FINAL DECISION ON WHETHER OVERTLY TO STAND ABOVE THE
BATTLE OR TO TAKE AN OPEN LEAD. HE HAS SOMETIMES SHOWN
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A PREFERENCE FOR A TOW-SIDED CENTER (IN PART PERHAPS TO
KEEP WOULD BE RIVALS, E.G. AREILZA, FROM GROWING TOO
STRONG) AND EARLIER HAD INDICATED HE WOULD STAY ABOVE THE
BATTLE, BUT IS NOW UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE TO TAKE THE
LEAD. THE DECISION IS FINELY BALANCED, SINCE THE ADVANT-
AGES OF PUTTING THE CENTER TOGETHER FOR SURE UNDER HIS
AEGIS MUST BE WEIGHED AGAINST THE DISADVANTAGES OF CRITI-
CISM BY THOSE ON THE RIGHT AND LEFT WHO WILL
BE THE LOSERS ALLEGING THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS UNFAIRLY
USED ITS POWERS TO "TILT" THE ELECTORAL PROCESS TOWARD

MEXICAN STYLE VICTORY.

--IN THE SENATE, WITH DIFFERENT ELECTORAL RULES, THERE IS LIKELY TO BE A BROAD CENTER, CENTER-LEFT, (POSSIBLE EVEN INCLUDING SOCIALISTS) COALITION TO OFFSET THE ADVANTAGE OF FRAGA'S ALIANZA POPULAR IN CONSERVATIVE RURAL PROVINCES WHICH HAVE THE SAME NUMBER OF SENATORS (FOUR) AS METROPOLITAN PROVINCES.

9. IN THIS MULTI-PARTY SITUATION, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY SINGLE COALITION LIST COULD GET AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF THE VOTES OR EVEN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF THE LOWER HOUSE SEATS, UNLESS SUAREZ LEADS A BROAD CENTRIST COALITION, IN WHICH CASE A MAJORITY OF SEATS BECOMES PLAUSIBLE. (THE PROPORTIONAL SYSTEM WILL REWARD THE LARGEST COALITIONS WITH ADDITIONAL SEATS.) SHOULD SUAREZ STAY ABOVE THE BATTLE, THE AGGREGATE OF CENTER AND CENTER-LEFT GROUPS WOULD PROVIDE BACKING FOR HIS CONTINUANCE WITH THOSE OUTSIDE PROBABLY UNABLE TO MOUNT A CHALLENGE. LOOKING AHEAD TO MORE SPECULATIVE MID-RANGE (POST-ELECTION) CHALLENGES, THE CORTES WILL LIKELY FUNCTION ON A TWO-TIER COALITION BASIS WITH EMPHASIS ON THE CONSTITUTION-WRITING TIER. WHILE THE CENTER AND CENTER-LEFT GROUPS WILL PROVIDE A GOVERNING TIER, TO THE EXTENT THIS CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY DEALS WITH NORMAL LEGISLATIVE MATTERS, THE CONSTITUTION-WRITING TIER WILL PRODUCE, IF HISTORY IS ANY GUIDE, A SHIFTING SYSTEM OF COALITIONS ON DISCRETE ISSUES. IN THIS, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE CENTER GROUPS WILL BE A FULCRUM FOR INITIATIVES ON CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS WHICH THE GOS MAY TAKE. THE NEW CORTES WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY IN ACHIEVING THE NECESSARY DEGREE OF PARLIAMENTARY DISCIPLINE. THE MAJOR ISSUES BEYOND ELECTIONS ARE LIKELY TO BE CONSTITUTION-MAKING(OF WHICH THE MAKE OR BREAK ISSUE WILL BE THE REGIONAL ONE), THE ECONOMIC ISSUE AND THE HARNESSING OF DISPARATE PERSONALITIES AND POLITICAL GROUPS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY WHEEL SO THAT THE NEW DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT IT PROVIDES EFFECTIVE AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT. STABLER

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Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MADRID01559
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770070-0394
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197703106/aaaadpic.tel
Line Count: 536
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cc0328ad-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
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Reference: 77 MADRID 600
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
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Review Release Date: n/a
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Review Transfer Date:
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SAS ID: 2952131
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE SPANISH POLITICAL PROCESS--SHORT TERM PROSPECTS AND MID- RANGE CHALLENGES
TAGS: PINT, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cc0328ad-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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